



Petition

Registration No.	29
Title	Develop a dedicated special needs Middle & High School for residents of Palmerston Rural Area
Presented on	14 March 2024
Presented by	Member for Katherine
Referred to	Minister for Education and Public Accounts Committee
Assembly debate	If the Committee recommends the Petition be debated it will appear on the Notice Paper
Date referred	14 March 2024
Response due	20 June 2024
Response received	
Response presented	

Petition

**To the Speaker and the Members of the Legislative Assembly of
the Northern Territory**

WE THE UNDERSIGNED RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH

We the undersigned respectfully urge the Northern Territory Government to develop a dedicated special needs Middle & High School for residents of Palmerston Rural Area, with infrastructure and services equivalent to the Henbury School in Darwin.

YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY THAT

The Northern Territory Government and Members of the Legislative Assembly commit to the development of a dedicated special needs Middle & High School for Palmerston and the rural area for the reasons below:

- 1) There is one dedicated Special Needs High School in the Greater Darwin region – the Henbury School in Tiwi, which is a purpose built facility.
- 2) Henbury officially only accepts students who are domiciled in the City of Darwin Local Government Area (population 84,000).

- 3) There is no Henbury equivalent for residents of Palmerston and the rural area (approximately 70,000 residents).
- 4) The only option for Palmerston\Rural special needs students entering middle/high schooling are Special Education Centres (SECS) which are makeshift facilities annexed to Palmerston College and Taminmin College.
- 5) These SECS provide Palmerston and the rural area with in equitable infrastructure, programs and services.
- 6) Palmerston SEC has been operating with enrolments exceeding capacity:
 - a. The Palmerston SEC (10 to 12 campus) has capacity for 68 students, while the 7 to 9 campus has capacity for 10.
 - b. Current enrolments of 110 clearly exceed this capacity.
- 7) This poses risk for both the special needs and mainstream students, including but not limited to:
 - a. Some special needs students are serial absconders, and require a secure environment which a mainstream school site cannot accommodate.
 - b. Insufficient withdrawal and flexible learning spaces for student with complex and severe emotional and sensory regulation needs.
- 8) Engineered plans have been developed and land set aside to extend the Forrest Parade special needs primary school in Palmerston, to add Middle School capacity.

AND YOUR PETITIONERS AS IN DUTY BOUND, WILL EVER PRAY.

Response